

Dental Amalgam Recovery Program



Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Dental Facilities That Remove or Place Amalgam Fillings

All owners and operators of dental facilities that remove or place amalgam fillings shall comply with the following waste management practices:

1. Segregate amalgam containing waste. Amalgam waste must never be placed in the regular trash, placed with infectious (red bag) waste, or flushed down the drain or toilet.

Amalgam waste includes non-contact scrap amalgam, contact amalgam, extracted teeth containing amalgam, used amalgam capsules, leaking or unusable amalgam capsules, and amalgam sludge from chair-side traps, vacuum filters, and screens (including the traps, filters and screens themselves). Place amalgam waste in an air-tight container.
2. Eliminate all use of bulk elemental mercury (also referred to as liquid or raw mercury). Any bulk elemental mercury must be recycled or disposed of as hazardous waste.
3. Use only pre-capsulated dental amalgam in the smallest appropriate size; keep a variety of amalgam capsules on hand to more closely match the amount needed in a restoration.
4. Change or empty chair-side traps frequently and store the trap and its contents with amalgam waste. Never rinse traps in the sink. If you have reusable traps, make sure any material you use to clean the trap is disposed of with amalgam waste.
5. Do not use sodium hypochlorite (bleach) and other chlorine-containing products to cleanse vacuum lines, as these products have been shown to release the mercury in the amalgam. Information on non-bleach line cleaners can be found at www.baywise.org.
6. Change vacuum pump filters and screens as needed or as directed by the manufacturer. Seal and store filters and screen, as well as their contents (including any water that may be present), with amalgam waste in an airtight container.
7. For dry vacuum turbine units, have a qualified maintenance technician, licensed amalgam recycler or hazardous waste disposal service pump out and clean the air-water separator tank at least once per six months. Perform this service more frequently if necessary to maintain suction or if so directed by the vacuum system manufacturer.
8. Have a licensed recycling contractor, mail-in service, or hazardous waste hauler remove your amalgam wastes. Recycling is the preferred method for disposal of amalgam wastes.
9. Obtain receipts or other documentation from your recycler or hazardous waste hauler of all amalgam waste recycling and disposal shipments. Keep these receipts on file for at least five years, and make them available to authorized City inspectors upon request.
10. Store amalgam waste in airtight containers. Follow recycler's or hauler's instructions for disinfection of waste and separation of contact and non-contact amalgam. Do not use disinfectant solutions with oxidizers, such as bleach, to disinfect the amalgam.
11. Use a licensed hauler to transport spent x-ray fixer solution to be recycled or managed as hazardous waste. Never pour fixer solution down the drain.
12. Train staff in the proper handling, management, and disposal of mercury-containing material and fixer solutions. Maintain a training log and keep this log for at least five years. This log must be made available to authorized City inspectors upon request.